

SPEECH

OF

HON. REUBEN E. FENTON,
OF NEW YORK.

Delivered in the House of Representatives, February 16, 1860.

Mr. FENTON obtained the floor.

Mr. MAYNARD. Will the gentleman from New York yield to a motion for the Committee to rise?

Mr. FENTON. I prefer to speak now. It seems most proper to reply at this time to the gentleman from Missouri, [Mr. ANDERSON,] who has just concluded.

Mr. ELY. I hope my colleague will be permitted to proceed.

Mr. FENTON. Mr. Chairman, I had very little right, and less desire, to engage in a discussion of the politics of the country prior to the organization of the House. The purpose of myself and those with whom I acted, during the eight weeks' contest, was first to organize, provide for the creditors of the Government—some of whom were on the verge of bankruptcy—and dispatch the public business; and while thus, out of regard for the public good, and in submission to parliamentary propriety, for other purposes, we were manacled, handcuffed, and tongue-tied, gentlemen on the other side of this Hall made onset with violent disunion and secession speeches, and with daily perversions of our principles and motives. Our object was peace and fraternal feeling; and we were opposed by disorder, acrimony, and menace.

I would not complain alone of disunion bluster, since what has been perhaps must be; and since, moreover, it has become almost as necessary to the country, from early introduction and periodical use down through our history, as the blight and frost of the season, or the yearly circuit of the menagerie.

At one time, the Union was to be destroyed by the right of search; at another, by the United States Bank; then again by the tariff; by the election of Fremont in 1856; and finally its doom was irrevocably sealed the other day, by the late John Brown, and Helper's Impending Crisis. It is not this that calls for reply, and it is not to this I speak, but to repel unjust and unfounded assaults upon my constituents and my party; and to vindicate, as well as I can, my country and its history. I blush with indignation at the misrepresentations and perversions which gentlemen on the other side of this Hall have indulged in; and did I not reflect that unfairness and wrong on the part of intelligent men are the expedient of conscious weakness and error, I should suppose they had been touch-

ed as with the spear of Ithuriel, which made them start forth into the deformity revealed during this controversy.

The gentleman from Alabama [Mr. CUREY] endeavored, in his usual able and ingenious manner, to place this controversy on vantage ground: from philosophical and logical deductions, disclaiming, however, the desire, and disavowing the attempt of his associates, to hold the Republican party responsible for the acts or excesses of individuals, or as affording evidence of the position and principles of our party.

But he asserts that a great change upon the subject of slavery has "come over the spirit of our dream;" that the cloud, which was no bigger than a man's hand, now covers the whole Northern horizon; and that our people have really, within the last few years, become an intensely anti-slavery people, with aims at once aggressive and alarming to the safety of the South—the logical result of all which is the ultimate extinction of their favorite institution. If the basis of his argument be correct, possibly the result indicated would follow; in this instance, however, I must think the honorable gentleman has been singularly infelicitous in his statement in respect to public sentiment and his study of political history. May he prefer for himself and his friends to "repose in the vagueness of a fallacy, rather than to be tormented with the precision of a logical definition."

The sentiment of the North upon this question has undergone no change; it is the same now, with a few exceptions of extreme ultraism for and against slavery; that it was in the earlier and better days of the Republic. The people of the North, at an early day, believed, with all your early statesmen, that slavery was a political, moral, and social evil, and in time they rid themselves of it, in harmony with their better convictions of duty. But it is true, that not until recently has this great and fixed anti-slavery sentiment, ever existing with the Northern masses, found it important, yea, necessary, to take the form of political organization. But a few years since, the men who now make up this great Republican party were mainly classified as Whigs and Democrats; and were they not then, as now, moved by the same hatred of this curse to free labor and to free men, and by the same deep-seated opposition to its extension over the free soil of this continent? Look over the record of

public men and public bodies, and there see the almost universal testimony; see, still further in the retrospect, that your fathers and our fathers proclaimed that men were created with equal, natural rights, and that the enslavement of man, of whatever color, was an invasion of these natural rights, and a violation of the spirit and genius of our free institutions. They held it to be an opprobrium to civilization; hence they sought to circumscribe it—to preserve soil then free, forever free, from its dark and blighting tread. They pushed it aside, with all possible haste, from a majority of the original thirteen States; they provided, as was supposed, for its gradual decay, by cutting off the foreign supply, and in every way they sought to build up and around it a cordon of free territory and free States, and free sentiment, that should exhale an atmosphere of liberty that slavery must breathe or die. And do gentlemen ask, why, therefore, this Republican party is commissioned with these great and sacred purposes of the founders of the Republic? I will tell them why. It is because they have violated these first covenants; because they have mocked at the faith of the fathers; because they have sought to desecrate the rightful heritage of free labor. It was not until after all this, and not until they had taken possession of a great party, and turned it into an instrument of aggression, a sort of Zouave force, ready and eager for work of carnage and slaughter, that this Northern fixed and unyielding sentiment clothed itself with the prerogatives of organization.

No, Mr. Chairman, it was not until after Texas had been annexed for the concealed purpose of extending slavery at the hazard of its pendant, a war with Mexico; not until after a law had been forced upon the North for the recapture of their fugitive slaves, odious in its details, repulsive in its main features to the enlightened judgment of our people, and violative of the rights of man in a trial for his liberty; and not until, still further on, this controlling interest in the affairs of the Government, *this sapping and mining power*, had, in exultant joy, destroyed the restriction against slavery north of 36° 30' north latitude, and upon that soil, once musical with the notes of freedom, revelled in despotic triumph upon the rights, the traditions, the franchises, and the dearest interests of our people, prostituting the ballot-box, driving from the polls rightful citizens, following by day and murdering by night men whose only crime was the uttering of sentiments which they had drank in among the hills and valleys of their former homes in the free North. We could wait no longer; it would not do to wait until the slave power had so interwoven itself into the very web of our political fabric that the integrity of our institutions was fatally imperilled.

The people of the North were reluctant to break away from their ancient party associations; for a long time after the South had wantonly sported with their rights, they reposed in the confidence of returning justice and the security of their pledges. But when at last these fond hopes were dispelled in their tearing the diadem from the brow of freedom in the northern half of the

old Louisiana purchase, the people of the North, from necessity, in vindication and maintenance of their principles and the principles of their ancestors, sprang at one bound into this organization, which, like a mighty army, swept along, extending its column from the early and constant home of freedom in the East to the scattered settlements of free labor beyond the Mississippi, until it now embraces in its conquest fifteen States of this Union. And I am not surprised that gentlemen of the South tremble and take alarm; they hear the tread of these millions of freemen; it is a mighty army marching on to take possession of the Government, well officered and fully equipped, and with weapons, munitions, and supplies, more complete and more potent than the army of Hannibal or Napoleon, or the brave followers of Jackson when he struck the decisive blow against British arrogance and aggression at New Orleans; inasmuch as the ballot-box, the free press, and free speech, in the cause of truth and justice, are more mighty in battle and more powerful in conquest than the sword.

Southern gentlemen have no right to complain of the numbers and might and objects of the Republican party, nor from these to accuse the people of the North of a change of sentiment upon the question of slavery. The history of this contest, made up from their own record, through the past twenty-five years, has been conducting the mind of patriotic citizens, of whatever party, all over the North, to the necessity of organization to preserve the principles of justice and liberty. It is not our people, but the people of the South—you, gentlemen—who have changed from the declared opinions and purposes of the founders. When the declaration of our rights was proclaimed, and the proclamation of our liberties and those rights which belonged to all, there existed among us an institution inconsistent with its great truths, and with the form and spirit of the Government which was framed. All the leading men of that day, and subsequently through a large period of our history, believed it to be not only anomalous to our institutions, but a deplorable evil; and they sought by every means to eradicate it. I will be indulged by gentlemen in calling attention to some of their ever-memorable sayings; for their testimony fortifies and sustains my proposition, and at the same time places in more vivid contrast these daily oblations of our Southern brethren at the shrine of human bondage.

Previous to the Revolution, while the nation was taking counsel, and preparing for the struggle of liberty against despotism, the people generally "were struck with the inconsistency of an appeal for their own liberties, while holding in bondage their fellow-men, guilty only of a skin not colored like their own." The people of Danbury, Connecticut, in town meeting, agreed to import no more slaves; at the same time declaring, "we cannot but think it a palpable absurdity so loudly to complain of attempts to enslave us, while we are actually enslaving others."

In Darien, Georgia, in 1775, the following resolution was passed at a meeting of citizens:

"To show the world that we are not influenced by any contracted or interested motives, but by a general philanthropy for all mankind, of whatever climate, language, or complexion, we hereby declare our disapprobation and abhorrence of the unnatural practice of slavery as (however the uncultivated state of the country or other specious arguments may plead for it) a practice founded in injustice and cruelty, and highly dangerous to our liberties as well as lives, debasing part of our fellow-creatures below men, and corrupting the virtue and morals of the rest."

Listen to Jefferson, in the Virginia Convention of 1774:

"The abolition of domestic slavery is the greatest object of desire in these colonies, where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state."

Again, in the Declaration of Independence:

"That all men are created equal; that they are endowed with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Again, in 1821, when urging a proposition upon his native State, he says:

"Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate, than that these people (the negroes) are to be free; nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same Government. Nature, habit, opinion, have drawn indelible lines of distinction between them. It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation, and in such slow degree as that the evil will wear off insensibly, and their place be, *pari passu*, filled up by free white laborers. If, on the contrary, it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up. We should look in vain for an example in the Spanish deportation or deletion of the Moors."

I need not allude to the anti-slavery sentiment of Virginia. It was written in letters of living light and unfading remembrance in the ordinance of 1787, passed by a unanimous vote of the States.

We find that the Constitutional Convention was presided over by Washington, who said "his vote would never be wanting for the passage of a law to abolish slavery;" and in that Convention, made up of men whose genius and patriotism had largely contributed to bear us up and carry us through the perilous assaults of the Revolution, who drank in the spirit of the contest, and were moved in the Convention by the purpose to secure and perpetuate to themselves and posterity, union, freedom, and happiness, all expressed themselves with equal force and emphasis, so far as coterminous history gives any account, against the evil, the wrong, and the curse, of human bondage.

Time will not permit me to deal largely in extracts from the fathers, nor are these necessary. I will only ask your attention to the recorded sayings of one or two of the more conspicuous statesmen. Gouverneur Morris said "he never would concur in upholding domestic slavery. It was a nefarious institution. It was the curse of Heaven."

Mr. Madison "thought it wrong to admit in the Constitution the idea of property in man."

Luther Martin, of Maryland, said:

"Slavery is inconsistent with the genius of republicanism, has a tendency to destroy those principles on which it is supported, as it lessens the sense of equal rights of mankind, and habituates us to tyranny and oppression."

When the Government went into operation, we find it supported by men who were open in their expressions of hostility to slavery.

John Adams, Vice President, had declared that "consenting to slavery is a sacrilegious breach of trust."

Alexander Hamilton, a member of the Abolition Society of New York, united in a petition for "those who, "free by the laws of God, are held in slavery by the laws of the State."

John Jay, Chief Justice of the United States, said that, in his sight, slavery was an "iniquity," "a sin of crimson dye."

Benjamin Franklin, President of the Abolition Society of Pennsylvania, appeared at the bar of Congress, near the close of his well-spent life, and entreated "that it would be pleased to countenance the restoration of liberty to those unhappy men who alone, in this land of freedom, are degraded into perpetual bondage."

Again, General Washington says, in a letter to John F. Mercer, September 9, 1786:

"I never mean, unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase, it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law."

The eloquent and patriotic Henry says, in a letter dated January 18, 1793:

"I believe a time will come when an opportunity will be offered to abolish this lamentable evil. Everything we can do is to improve it, if it happens in our day; if not, let us transmit to our descendants, together with our slaves, a pity for their unhappy lot, and an abhorrence for slavery. If we cannot reduce this wish for reformation to practice, let us treat the unhappy victims with lenity. It is the furthest advance we can make toward justice. It is a debt we owe to the purity of our religion, to show that it is at variance with that law which warrants slavery."

And the eccentric genius and well-wisher for the liberty of the black race, John Randolph, after speaking in deprecation of the extension of slavery and its horrors, makes use of the following language:

"I give to my slaves their freedom, to which my conscience tells me they are justly entitled. It has a long time been a matter of the deepest regret to me, that the circumstances under which I inherited them, and the obstacles thrown in the way by the laws of the land, have prevented my emancipating them in my lifetime, which it is my full intention to do in case I can accomplish it."

But, sir, I hasten on, passing the many pages of testimony from distinguished and patriotic men in all the walks of public and private life, to him whose voice was so magic and potent in Senate Chambers and among the millions without, and at the mention of whose name the heart of every American throbs with deeper emotions, and kindles with increased admiration and pride.

I quote from a speech made by the distinguished Clay, before the American Colonization Society:

"We are reproached with doing mischief by the agitation of this question. The society goes into no household to disturb its domestic tranquility; it addresses itself to no slaves, to weaken their obligations of obedience. It seeks to affect no man's property. It neither has the power nor will to affect the property of any one, contrary to his consent."

"If they would repress all tendencies towards liberty and ultimate emancipation, they must do more than put down the benevolent efforts of this society. They must go back to the era of our liberty and independence, and muzzle the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return. They must revive the slave trade, with all its train of atrocities."

Ay, sir, revive the slave trade as we now see it being revived!

"They must suppress the workings of British philanthropy, seeking to ameliorate the condition of the unfortunate West Indian slaves. They must arrest the career of South American deliverance from thralldom. They must blow out the moral lights around us, and extinguish that greatest

torch of all, which America presents to a benighted world, pointing the way to their rights, their liberties, and their happiness. And when they have achieved all these purposes, their work will be yet incomplete. They must penetrate the human soul, and eradicate the light of reason and the love of liberty. Then, and not until then, when universal darkness and despair prevail, can you perpetuate slavery, and repress all sympathies and all humane and benevolent efforts among freemen in behalf of the unhappy portion of our race who are doomed to bondage."

In the United States Senate, in 1850, he used the following memorable words:

"I am extremely sorry to hear the Senator from Mississippi say that he requires, first, the extension of the Missouri compromise line to the Pacific, and also that he is not satisfied with that, but requires, if I understand him correctly, a positive provision for the admission of slavery south of that line. * * * Coming, as I do, from a slave State, it is my solemn, deliberate, and well-matured determination, that no power, no earthly power, shall compel me to vote for the positive introduction of slavery either south or north of that line."

"Sir, while you reproach, and justly, too, our British ancestors for the introduction of this institution upon the continent of America, I am, for one, unwilling that the posterity of the present inhabitants of California and of New Mexico shall reproach us for doing just what we reproach Great Britain for doing to us." * * *

Hear him further; he says:

"So long as God allows the vital current to flow through my veins, I will never, never, never, by word or thought, by mind or will, aid in admitting one rood of free territory to the everlasting curse of human bondage."

And, gentlemen of the South, you had not entirely abandoned these wise and salutary and philanthropic truths—the doctrine that freedom is beneficent and just, and ought to be extended; and that slavery was mischievous and immoral, and ought to be restricted—when you asked our co-operation in the project to annex Texas; if you had, then you were guilty of the deepest deception and shame. Am I not correct? Let us see. Your party in the North and South proclaimed, in the canvass of 1844, in respect to the annexation of Texas, these two fundamental ideas: first, that by the removal of slaves to Texas, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri, would speedily become free States; second, that the transfer of slaves to the borders of Mexico would open the way for the entire extinction of slavery, by its transfer to regions where the prejudice of race and color do not exist; and by the absorption in, or amalgamation with, the mixed races of the torrid regions, where they could enjoy substantial equality, social and political.

What said Hon. Robert J. Walker during the Presidential contest of that year, (1844,) and I may say the influence of whose ingenious arguments, thrown broadcast over the country North, was manifest in determining the fortunes of the struggle, and served to secure for him, as a reward for such important political service, a commanding position in the Cabinet of President Polk?

"Nor can it be disguised that, by the reannexation, as the number of free blacks augmented in the slaveholding States, they would be diffused gradually, through Texas, into Mexico and Central and Southern America, where nine-tenths of their present population are already of the colored races, and where, from their vast preponderance in number, they are not a degraded caste, but upon a footing, not merely of legal, but, what is far more important, of actual equality with the rest of the population. Here, then, if Texas is annexed, throughout the vast region and salubrious and delicious climate of Mexico and of Central and Southern America, a large and rapidly-increasing portion of the African race will disappear

from the limits of the Union. The process will be gradual and progressive, without a shock and without a convulsion."

"The annexation of Texas is the only safety-valve for the whole Union, and the only practicable outlet for the African population, through Texas, into Mexico and Central and Southern America. * * *

"Again, then, the question is asked, 'Is slavery never to disappear from the Union?' This is a startling and momentous question, but the answer is easy and the proof is clear; it will certainly disappear if Texas is reannexed to the Union; not by abolition, but against and in spite of all its frenzy, slowly and gradually, by diffusion, as it has already thus nearly receded from several of the more northern of the slaveholding States, and as it will continue thus more rapidly to recede by the reannexation of Texas, and finally, in the distant future, without a shock, without abolition, without a convulsion, disappear into and through Texas, into Mexico and Central and Southern America." * * *

Mr. Walker's was not an isolated instance in the promulgation of these views; indeed, sir, these opinions upon the subject of annexation were the vitalizing elements of the canvass, and were urged by the Democratic party as noble and imperishable progress in justice and civilization, by which a portion of the slave States, if not all, were to escape from the barbarism of the ruder ages, and take their stand on the principle evolved from our struggle for independence and our constitutional history.

Turn to the debates in Congress, and examine the speeches, in the interest of Mr. Polk and annexation, of Senator Breese, of Illinois, June 3, 1844; Senator Dickinson, of New York, February 22, 1845. (Appendix Congressional Globe, 2d session Twenty-eighth Congress, page 321;) Morris, of New Hampshire, January 25, 1845; Gen. Ashley, of Arkansas, February 23, 1845—page 283 of Debates; Tibbatts, of Kentucky, May 17, 1844. And I will not omit to quote from the speech of the honorable gentleman now at the other end of the avenue, whose pious and saintly regard for the interest of free labor, and the enlargement of the area of freedom, has been painfully illustrated since his installment as President of these United States.

In the Senate, June 8, 1844, Hon. James Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, said:

"After mature reflection, I now believe that the acquisition of Texas will be the means of limiting, not enlarging, the dominion of slavery. In the government of the world, Providence generally produces great changes by gradual means. There is nothing rash in the councils of the Almighty. May not, then, the acquisition of Texas be the means of drawing the slaves far to the south, to a climate more congenial to their nature; and may they not finally pass off into Mexico, and there mingle with a race where no prejudice exists against their color? * * * Texas will open an outlet, and slavery itself may thus finally pass the Del Norte, and be lost in Mexico."

Such were then your declared objects and desire—perhaps put forth to deceive—to obtain power and betray. It now looks as though they were the singing of Circe—"the voice of the charmer, charming never so wisely"—lulling the suspicions of the people of the North to sleep, and deceiving them in regard to the stupendousness of the fraud you were practicing upon their credulity. Whether so or not, your party were compelled, in consonance with the general sentiment that slavery was an evil of the deepest and darkest dye, and that its extension, under the care and consent of our Government, was an intolerable crime, to make this record, to give these assurances to the people; and I need not say that they were in accordance with the con-

viction of the civilized world—at least, outside of the fifteen slave States of this Union.

The South cannot deny that slavery, up to a recent date in our history, was made to rest entirely on local usage; it was made so by civil and common law, because it was assumed to be in violation of natural right. And being such a violation, it follows that it is a moral wrong; and it has been so regarded by the mass of our people from the earliest times. In other words, it was a privileged and exceptional institution, doomed, sooner or later, to perish. In this view, men have spoken of the irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery; and it is a philosophical truth, that one or the other, in the fullness of time, must recede; one must triumph and become supreme. Sober men, and men of reason, will not be in doubt as to the result—no more than they will doubt the ultimate triumph of right and justice, in all things, over error and wrong. In this view, speaking not of my political duties and obligations to Government, and disclaiming in this respect, or any other, the right to interfere with the domestic institutions of the South, I hope the time may come, not distant, when the sun, in his course across the continent, will not shine upon a slave; when the inalienable rights which belong to all men shall be universally recognised, and become the conceded right to be enjoyed by *all*. If I speak with undue warmth of expression, in the words of Edmund Burke, "something must be pardoned to the spirit of liberty."

But to return to the point of digression. I had been exhibiting the recorded views of the Democratic party in regard to slavery—the views of the South and the North—at an early period, and also at a later period.

What does the South say now? What is claimed in its name and behalf, in the meridian of this Administration, and in the strength of your power? You maintain the perfect rectitude of slavery; that it is the highest type of civilization; that it is neither wrong nor an evil; that it is the most economical form of labor; that it is adapted to promote the most perfect social condition; that it is in conformity with the revealed Word of God; that it must travel with the Constitution into the Territories, and there be sustained and protected by it; and the adoption of these views, or disunion, is the ultimatum you now propose to the whole nation. Not only the public men and public bodies of the South boldly declare and vehemently insist on these doctrines, but there are camp-followers and soldiers of fortune in the North—men there who say, with Charles O'Connor, that the negro is doomed by nature to be the bondman of the white man.

When I uttered my convictions from my place in this House, in 1854, that it was the design of the Democratic party—or those who had control of it—in the repeal of the Missouri compromise, to extend negro bondage, it was denied. And when again I said, February 24, 1858, in a speech then made, that it was designed to carry slavery into all the Territories under the protection of the Constitution, and that no power, not

even the Congress, nor the people of the Territories, could prevent or remove it, you indignantly repelled the charge, as false in fact and inference. How times have changed! and more rapidly still have men changed.

The President, in his late message, lays down your party creed. Hear what he says:

"The right has been established of every citizen to take his property of any kind, including slaves, into the common Territories belonging equally to all the States of the Confederacy, and to have it protected there under the Federal Constitution. Neither Congress, nor a Territorial Legislature, nor any human power, has any authority to annul or impair this vested right."

It is you, then, not we, who have changed position upon this question; and the Republican party was organized from the necessity of the case to preserve the maxims of our early faith and pledges; the principles upon which our Government was founded, and upon the maintenance of which, in my judgment, its perpetuity depends. I need not speak of the next step in the effort to nationalize slavery. I claim to be no seer or prophet in respect to the purposes of men, or parties, in this work of placing our Government under the control of the slave power.

The gentleman from Texas, [Mr. REAGAN,] a few days since, with disingenuous boldness, indicated one of the advance steps the Democratic party will soon take; and I could, therefore, claim no credit for the discovery in this instance. If I understood him correctly, he claimed that not even State authority—State sovereignty—can abolish or impair the right of property in slaves, short of revolution—that is, the right to abolish would be a revolutionary right; that its claim for protection under Federal and State authority rests upon the same right as all other kinds of property. Indeed, I do not see why this is not a logical sequence from the premises. Then it is, that slavery may go to New York, to the home of the Pilgrim Fathers, sweep along the shores of the great lakes, and darken the broad prairies of the West, under the sanctions of this vested right of property in slaves under the Constitution. And, Mr. Chairman, is it not a remarkable and instructive fact, that while the South claim these immunities and this protection for their slaves in the Territories and in the States, they are at this moment driving Northern men from their midst, for real or suspected sentiments in favor of the institutions of the North, or for a preference for the condition of the free white laborers over that of the bondmen in chains?

I pass, however, from this sad spectacle of the degradation and tyranny incident to, I may say inseparable from, a society which insists upon the Divine character of human servitude, to note the one step further in this work to complete its supremacy. The revival of the African slave trade rather follows as a corollary to the doctrine of extension and perpetuation; and I apprehend the party will soon accept this tenet of faith, now urged by a large portion of its members in the South.

If slavery is humane, beneficent, and just, how can the philanthropy and Christianity of our Democratic brethren be at ease, while vast numbers

of negroes in Africa are deprived of the elevating influences of their discipline and instruction upon the broad plantations of the South? In truth, sir, from this view of the rightfulness of slavery, advocacy of the revival of the slave trade follows; and, as a party, the Democracy will as surely reach this point as the waters of yonder Potomac, in their course, will reach the Chesapeake Bay.

The Republican party will oppose these present and prospective schemes, by which the rich freight of precious interests secured by our form of Government may be precipitated in ruin, and it will seek to correct the public sentiment of the South in respect to its own doctrine, so wickedly perverted by those in position and power. It will not only do this, and stay the march of slavery into the common Territory, but it will undertake to correct the financial mismanagement and abuses which have assumed such gigantic proportions under your administration of public affairs. We shall strive to lessen the present enormous and profligate expenditures, establish fairness in the dispensation of patronage, and secure perfect fidelity and honesty with all the officers and agents of the Government.

No one can complain of this, except upon the principle that he who disturbs the peace shall have full license to destroy it; that he who ravages a portion of our inheritance shall be at liberty to pillage and lay waste the whole; upon the principle that the highwayman who takes your purse shall be entitled to your raiment and food.

The Democratic party have exercised power corruptly; as the record shows. They have not only abused the trust which free labor committed to them, but they have rioted upon their substance, and wrested from them their fair, equal privilege in the political advantages, honors, and emoluments, under the Government.

Let us see if this is not as I have stated; and I may here remark, that I am led to the following investigation with increased desire, because of the partial statements, or omitted tables, in the comparisons drawn by the honorable member from Mississippi [Mr. BARKSDALE] a short time since.

The population of the South is scarcely more than half that of the North. Since the organization of the Government, there have been eighteen elections for President, in which the candidates chosen were twelve of them Southerners and slaveholders, and only six of them Northerners, four of which six stood upon a Southern platform; that no Northern man has ever been re-elected, while five of the Southern men have; or, in other words, that out of the seventy-two years of Federal administration closing with Mr. Buchanan's term, Southern men and slaveholders have held the reins for forty-three years, or more than two-thirds of the time, and have directed them a greater part of the remaining third.

In all the other departments of the Federal Government, the South has enjoyed the same ascendancy. It has had seventeen out of the twenty-eight judges of the Supreme Court; fourteen

out of the nineteen Attorneys General; sixty-one out of the seventy-seven Presidents of the Senate; twenty-one out of thirty-three Speakers of the House; and eighty out of one hundred and thirty-four foreign Ministers.

The Senate of the United States consists of sixty-six members—representing fifteen slave and eighteen free States; the free States have a white population of about eighteen million, the slave States have a white population of about eight million. The Senate have twenty-two committees; and, in fairness, the free States ought to have a preponderance proportional to their numbers and power. How stands the case in the arrangement of the Senate at the beginning of the present Congress? The chairmanship of sixteen is given to the slaveholding members, and the chairmanship of the six others to members who side with them in politics. Not a single committee of any importance is assigned to the free States, either in the chairmanship or in the majority of its members. The Republicans, who have twenty-five representatives in the Senate, or considerably more than one-third of the whole body, are allowed two members on each committee of seven. Could anything be more sectional than this?

Now, can any one say that this is altogether fair? I believe I am authorized to say that the people of the North regard it as an unjust and invidious discrimination; and, because they have determined to take these matters in hand, the South should not get into a rage, and menace in a furious manner a rupture of the Federal bands. It is an old maxim, that "wisdom is more valuable than rubies;" and so I think it will not require much observation and experience, under this change of administration, to convince the wildest opponent of the present hour that it works well; that the effects are beneficent, and that the peace and greatness and glory of our whole country are promoted thereby.

But I am not done with these tabular statements and comparisons. The following table is compiled from the last published annual report of the Secretary of the Treasury, and shows the amount of revenue from the customs in 1857, and the expenses of collecting it for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1858:

	Revenue.	Expenses.	No. Employes.
Maine.....	\$358,980.66	\$107,102.69	121
N. Hampsbire	5,530.54	10,982.49	21
Vermont.....	8,581.70	16,285.47	33
Massachusetts	7,457,276.09	1,286,531.87	319
Rhode Island.	80,126.06	23,562.87	63
Connecticut....	237,307.91	55,763.34	45
New York.....	42,721,862.58	1,303,754.11	1,211
New Jersey....	5,011.36	9,140.93	30
Pennsylvania.	3,688,766.96	214,492.11	203
Delaware.....	2,004.85	15,649.36	8
Maryland.....	1,475,823.57	144,108.42	128
Virginia.....	246,130.00	71,807.73	58
Dist. Columbia	25,527.79	4,077.89	0
N. Carolina....	65,823.08	15,962.20	37
S. Carolina....	511,856.53	79,247.51	61
Georgia.....	237,168.06	38,918.04	33
Alabama.....	162,360.42	65,286.70	25
Mississippi....	4,443.90	1,419.70	6
Florida.....	56,017.71	30,240.10	45
California.....	1,688,176.82	433,034.83	149
Louisiana.....	3,501,898.20	204,797.35	210
Texas.....	154,517.99	58,682.67	52
Ohio.....	270,104.68	17,439.46	28
Michigan.....	147,211.53	14,934.16	42

Illinois.....	183,878.29	13,546.62	21
Missouri.....	365,703.78	12,143.89	6
Kentucky.....	22,225.41	2,268.44	6
Tennessee.....	149,000.54	7,715.21	3
Iowa.....	40,455.80	2,801.10	3
Wisconsin.....	284,790.88	6,962.89	8
Minnesota.....	68.00	2,450.00	2
Wash. Ter.....	6,522.61	4,943.15	9
Oregon Ter.....	4,199.11	26,995.67	8

Now, sir, you see by this that the State that I have the honor in part to represent contributes more to the support of the General Government than all the other States put together; and we get from the Federal Treasury scarcely a dollar to improve our channels of commerce, our rivers and harbors, while millions are lavished in constructing public buildings, harbors, and fortifications, in Southern States, which contribute to the general support not a tithe in the comparison. More than this. There, only one-fortieth part of the revenue is expended in collecting it; and in Maryland, one-tenth is consumed; in Virginia, North Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi, one-fourth; in Florida, more than half; while in Delaware, it seems that the custom-houses do a losing business, costing seven times as much as they yield.

This is not all. Under your administration of the Government, the first year of Mr. Buchanan's term, the expenditures amounted to the sum of \$81,585,667.76—more than the expenditures for the whole of the first twenty years of our national existence. For the first forty years, from 1789 to 1830, inclusive, including the war of 1812, our expenses were \$293,541,195.92, and for five years of Mr. Pierce's and Mr. Buchanan's reign, it amounted to \$316,949,226.65; so they spent of the people's money \$33,408,030.73 more, during five years, than for the first half of the entire period of our national being.

During Jackson's term, the revenue did not exceed \$26,000,000 annually, and yet he was able to conduct the Government from this, and extinguish \$50,000,000 of the public debt; but our present Chief Magistrate, with a revenue of over fifty million dollars annually, is not only unable to balance the accounts and extinguish the public debt, but during the first year increases it \$40,000,000 under his financial mismanagement, extravagance, and corruption. The expenses of the army have nearly trebled, and the expense of collecting the revenue has increased over forty per cent., or \$1,700,000.

In 1840, the "miscellaneous" items were severely criticized, and contributed in a large degree to defeat Mr. Van Buren in his canvass for re-election. It then rose to \$2,500,000, and it now reaches the vast sum of \$18,000,000. Gentlemen will recollect the charges then preferred against Mr. Van Buren, because of his profligality in furnishing and conducting the White House; and yet all was within the outlay, over salary, of \$4,000 a year—while Mr. Buchanan, with his more expensive luxuries, elegance, and profligate habits, squanders \$35,000 a year, exclusive of his salary. Now, when it is considered that this money comes mainly from taxes, direct and indirect, on the industry of the country, three-fourths of which is found in the North—a burden upon our capital, our skill, our arts, our professions,

and our labor—it should not create wonder or surprise that we seek to return to frugal and economical expenditure; and to this end will exert all fair means at the ballot-box, and in every constitutional way, to obtain supremacy in the affairs of the Government.

I will pursue these statements and comparisons no further. Sufficient has been shown for my purpose, and sufficient, I trust, to convince all fair-minded men that, from the "highways and by-ways of the so-called Democratic party there comes up an insufferable stench," pervading every tissue of their administration.

But, sir, bad as these practices are in the administration of the Government, demoralizing as are the means employed to accomplish these purposes, and proscriptive and intolerant as are the usages of this party in the distribution of favors and patronage, it is of minor importance compared with the obstinate and continued effort to destroy the principles of justice and freedom which are the substratum of the whole superstructure of our free institutions. It is said by Tacitus, I believe, that the first advances of tyranny are steep and perilous; but when once you are entered, parties and instruments are ever ready to espouse you.

How true is this of that bold step of the slave power which first attracted the attention of our confiding people! I allude to the overthrow of that time-honored ordinance of freedom, in 1854, from which act every patriot heart in the North shrank with horror, and the whole nation was then aroused to a sense of danger. Moses was not more surprised and appalled, when he came down from the mountains and found his hosts in tumult, than were the freedom-loving people of this Confederacy when violent hands were laid on this security to free labor; and none were found, in all the North, so reckless as to applaud the cruel purpose. Since then—ah! most painful truth—since then, from among the universal sentiment of condemnation, men have been found who approve of the work, and go forth with this party to new scenes and fresh fields of innovation and invasion. The Republican party intend to arrest their progress, and they can only do so effectually by taking the Government into their own hands. They will trench upon not the least constitutional right; they intend no overt act, nor will they countenance any, affecting the safety or security of Southern men's human chattels; they contemplate no illegal conspiracy, or secret treason, but will march with firm and honest tread to the very verge of their constitutional rights, and there stop.

The most conclusive proof that there are no considerable number of men in the North with such wrong intent, is to be found in the late feeble attempt of John Brown "to promote the good of freedom by the evil of servile strife and civil war;" who, after two years of effort, with all his power to inspire men with his own views, with his perseverance and heroism of character; with his truth, sincerity, and honesty, heightened and impelled by the cruelties and wrongs heaped upon him and his family in Kansas, you find him surrounded by only sixteen white men and five

negroes in his attempt "to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free." And it is not likely that the folly and madness of even this experiment will be repeated during the present century, if ever. It is not from the North slaveholders have cause of alarm in methods of conspiracy, violence, and blood. Jefferson foresaw the source of greatest peril, when he said:

"The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passion—the most unrelenting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other." * * * "Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." * * * "The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest."

That is, a contest between the enslavers and the enslaved.

From the views, then, of one of the most distinguished of Southern statesmen, it is not a wild conjecture to suppose that, in the progress of events, unless some change takes place in his condition, the slave will rise and assert his natural rights, and stamp on "the wild and guilty phantasy that man can hold property in man."

And now, Mr. Chairman, a word in respect to this thing with seven heads and ten horns, which has furnished a theme for so much impetuous declamation and ridiculous parade with our Southern friends, and I close. I refer, sir, to the publication of Mr. Helder, entitled *The Impending Crisis of the South*, mainly drawn from the United States census of 1850, calculated to prove that slavery is a curse to the South; that it is paralyzing to the prosperity of the South—an incubus upon their material and social advancement; and that it operates to crush out all the individualism, hopes, and primal instincts, of the non-slaveholding class, and is therefore to be deprecated.

And just here I will be allowed to read from this work, the recommending of which, by accident or otherwise, has been sufficient cause, in the view of Democrats, for keeping this House unorganized for eight weeks, and for denouncing Republican members with all manner of opprobrious epithets—yes, sir, read from this work the most intense abolition, treasonable, and incendiary doctrine to be found between its lids, the utterances of one of Virginia's own sons, and who has just been rewarded by this same Democratic party with the French mission! Listen to the *heretical* language of Hon. Charles James Faulkner, in the Virginia House of Delegates, January 20, 1832:

"Sir, if there be one who concurs with that gentleman as to the harmless character of this institution, let me request him to compare the condition of the slaveholding portion of this Commonwealth, barren, desolate, and seared, as it were, by the avenging hand of Heaven, with the description which we have of this country from those who first broke its virgin soil. To what is this change to be attributed? *Alone to the withering and blasting effects of slavery*—to that vice in the organization of society, by which one half of its inhabitants are arrayed in interest and feeling against the other half—to that unfortunate state of society in which freemen regard labor as disgraceful, and slaves shrink from it as a burden tyrannically imposed upon them.

"In the language of the wise and patriotic Jefferson, 'You must approach it—you must bear it—you must adopt some plan of emancipation, or worse will follow.'"

Now, I do not think I have ever said anything

as fierce and defiant and sweeping in condemnation of your system of negro slavery as this; and I do not know that Mr. Helder has. I do not say it is unjust or unwise; it is rather a question of policy or taste, which I leave to Southern gentlemen to settle in their own way. But to the matter of arraignment; and I have this to say. My constituents do not expect me to ask remission of the South, when, or how, or where, I may endorse or recommend, for circulation or otherwise; any pamphlet or book whatever. They treat with respectful disdain your perversions of my motives, and condemn the disingenuous argument of gentlemen, wrung from infelicitous phrases and sentences to be found in the work, to cast imputations upon my patriotism and honor.

My constituents and the free people of the North have not arrived at the point when they will, in servile obedience to any class of men, be dictated to in what they shall read, nor what they shall respectfully advise others to read; and I trust in God they never will. A large majority of the people of the North will take the liberty of exposing the injurious and detasing influence of slavery upon our national politics; its disadvantages in an economical point of view; its antagonism to Christianity and the higher and better interests of civilization; and acting upon these convictions, in stern political duty, will strive to limit its extension and destroy its preponderance in the affairs of the General Government.

This is no new doctrine or modern theory; it was the universal conviction of our people, up to a few years ago, as patent upon every page of our political history as the talismanic characters on the cinerary of Solymon were to his hosts; and I have aimed, I trust successfully, to show that the Republican party, of which I am proud to be a member, is but the historical outgrowth of the condition and circumstances of our country, while its principles are as old as the framework of our society, and coeval with the first notions of our ancestors of independent self-government.

It occupies now no temporary ground; it has no entirely special purpose; but with duties as varied as the interests of our free institutions and the welfare of our people, the purity of its doctrines, sanctioned by the fathers and sustained by a long line of illustrious patriots and statesmen, gives it a permanency and promise not measured by generations of men. And to the immediate causes which called our organization into being, add the lawless and unprovoked violence to freemen in Kansas; the attempt not only to force slavery upon that fair domain, contrary to the will of the people, but to convey and protect it by Federal power wherever the Constitution extends; and now the espionage and ostracism carried on in the South against Northern men—and you have given us a rising power and swelling current of public opinion which can no more be turned aside than the course of the winds or the on-sweeping tide of the ocean.